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ABSTRACT

This report examines the employment, further education, and satisfaction outcomes of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal former students who attended public colleges and institutes in British Columbia (Canada). Data were drawn from 1995, 1997, and 1999 surveys of 2,323 Aboriginal and 55,252 non-Aboriginal former students approximately 9 months after they completed all or most of their program. Outcomes were compared for arts and science programs, applied programs (those leading to employment in a specific field), and adult basic education (ABE) programs (those providing education at the secondary level or lower). Aboriginal students were more likely to be female and older, compared to other survey respondents. Aboriginal students were more inclined to enroll for academic or credential-related reasons than non-Aboriginal students. More Aboriginal students were enrolled in ABE programs than non-Aboriginal students. Aboriginal students were less likely (47 percent) to be employed full-time than non-Aboriginal students (61 percent). The rate of going on to further studies increased for Aboriginal respondents in applied and ABE programs but changed little in arts and sciences programs. Although a majority of Aboriginal respondents reported that their education prepared them very well for further studies or for getting and performing their jobs, some Aboriginal students wanted more Aboriginal content in the curriculum, better day-care facilities, increased tutoring and individual attention, better instructors, and increased student services. Appendices contain notes on the survey project, a glossary, and data tables. (TD)

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Special Report on Aboriginal Former Students from the 1995, 1997, and 1999 BC College and Institute Student Outcomes Surveys

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Introduction

Report objective

This report was commissioned by the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology (MAETT) to explore the educational and labour market outcomes of Aboriginal former students. The report also provides information on respondents' characteristics and evaluation of their college experiences.

Throughout the report, the educational and labour market outcomes of Aboriginal former students are compared with those of non-Aboriginal former students. A trend analysis is also presented, examining the outcomes from three different survey years: 1995, 1997, and 1999.

Background

Aboriginal education is a priority of the provincial government. Over the past several years, MAETT has focused specifically on developing strategies to increase access, participation, retention, and success rates of Aboriginal learners at public post-secondary institutions. MAETT has implemented these strategies through the Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Policy Framework, established in 1995.

In addition, one of the strategic objectives of MAETT's 2000-01 Performance Plan is to eliminate barriers affecting the participation of Aboriginal learners in post-secondary education. Performance measures include the number and percentage of the Aboriginal population participating in post-secondary education, as well as the labour market and educational outcomes of Aboriginal students.

BC College and Institute Student Outcomes Survey

The data for this report were drawn from the 1995, 1997, and 1999 BC College and Institute Student Outcomes Surveys.[1] Former students from Arts and Sciences, Applied, and Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs[2] at colleges, university colleges, and institutes were interviewed approximately 9 to 15 months after having completed all, or a significant portion, of their educational program. The following table shows, for each of the three survey years, the number of former students selected for surveying, those that responded to the survey, and the number of former students who identified themselves as Aboriginal. An Aboriginal student is one who answered 'yes' to question 56: "Are you an Aboriginal person? That is, an indigenous person of Canada, including First Nations (status or non-status) or Métis or Inuit?"

1. See Appendix A for a description of the Student Outcomes Project.
2. See Appendix B for definitions of these and other terms.

College and Institute Outcomes Survey

	Former students selected for survey	Respondents	Response Rate	Aboriginal former students
1995	27,469	20,491	75%	581
1997	30,390	20,403	67%	878
1999	33,852	16,681	49%	864

One difficulty in comparing results across multiple years is that some of the survey questions, as well as possible response categories, have changed. For cases where comparisons are not possible for this reason, only 1999 data are presented.

Data for Adult Basic Education former students

ABE students were introduced to the BC College and Institute Student Outcomes Project in 1996. From 1996 to 1998, ABE former students were included in the survey if they had completed a minimum of three approved ABE courses.[3] The three-course requirement was felt by some ABE practitioners to be too restrictive, given that some longer, single ABE courses provided these students with a significant exposure to their institution. In 1999, the requirements for inclusion of ABE students were expanded (at some pilot institutions) to include those who had taken one or more approved ABE courses. It was then possible to assess if the responses of this larger group were in any way different from the responses from the more restrictive three-course definition. No statistically significant difference was found between the responses of ABE former students who had taken one or more courses and those who had taken a minimum of three courses.

For certain outcomes results, ABE students are excluded from the analysis. These cases are clearly marked, and an explanation of why it was appropriate to exclude this group is included.

Percentages and rounding

For consistency and ease of presentation, percentages in the report text and charts have been rounded to whole numbers; because of that rounding, totals may not always add to 100. Unless otherwise noted, each percentage is based on the number of students who responded to the question. Those who refused the question, or said "don't know," were not included in the calculation.

The dollar amounts cited in the report have been rounded to the nearest $10.

3. Based on MAETT's ABE Articulation Grid.

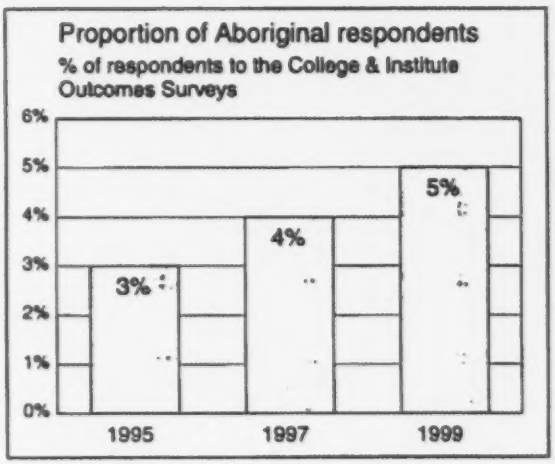
Key Findings

What is the proportion of Aboriginal respondents in the College and Institute Student Outcomes Survey?

The proportion of Aboriginal respondents in the BC College and Institute survey is increasing.

Since 1995, there has been an upward trend in the representation of Aboriginal former students in the College and Institute Student Outcomes survey.

These levels of participation in the survey correspond roughly with other survey results. Individuals identified by the 1996 Canadian census as Aboriginal comprised roughly 4 percent of BC's total population.[4] A follow-up survey of 1996 baccalaureate graduates from BC's public universities reported that 2 percent of those surveyed identified themselves as Aboriginal.[5]



What are the characteristics of Aboriginal former students?

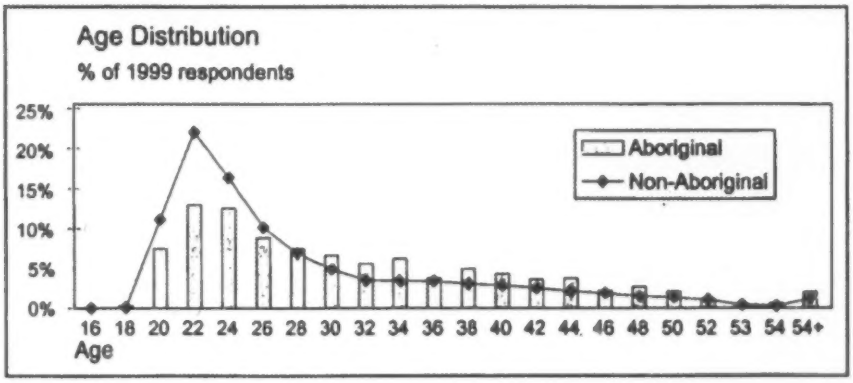
Aboriginal former students are more likely to be female and older.

In 1999, 63 percent of Aboriginal former students were female, compared with 55 percent of non-Aboriginal former students.

Aboriginal former students also tended to be older than their non-Aboriginal counterparts. In 1999, their median ages were 29 and 25 respectively. The age distribution of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal former students at the time of

4. Statistics Canada (1996). Canadian Statistics - Total population by Aboriginal Group, 1996 Census, Canada, the provinces and territories. http://www.statcan.ca/english/Pgdb/People/Population/demo39a.htm September 2000.
5. Hawkey, Collen and Robert Lee (1999). Class of '96 One-Year After Graduation: One Year Graduate Follow-Up Survey of 1996 Baccalaureate Graduates from BC's Public Universities - Report of Findings.

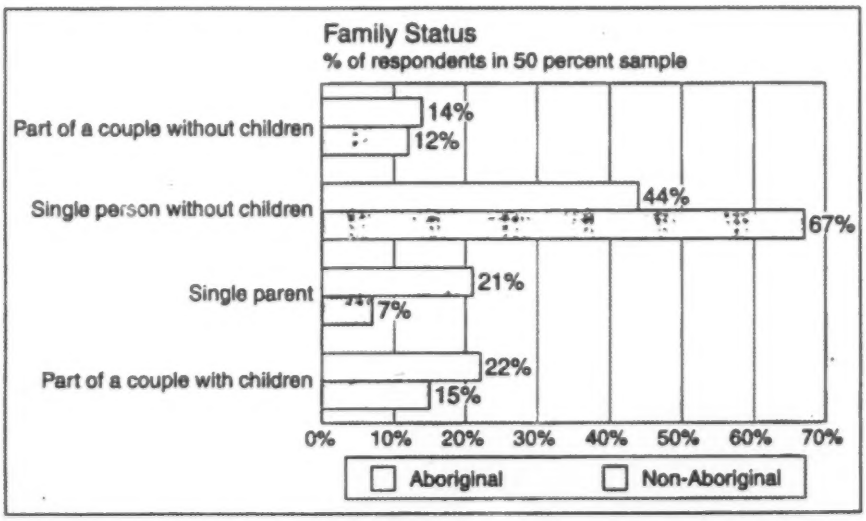
the survey showed a relatively high concentration of non-Aboriginal former students in the 20 to 26 age group, and a much flatter distribution of Aboriginal former students across most age groups.



These differences in age distributions between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal former students is in contrast to the overall Aboriginal population in BC, which is notably younger than the non-Aboriginal community. For example, data from the 1996 Census identifies almost 50 percent of the Aboriginal population to be less than 25 years old, whereas non-Aboriginal persons younger than 25 make up less than one third of the non-Aboriginal population of BC. Less than 10 percent of the Aboriginal population is 55 or older, while almost one third of the non-Aboriginal population falls into this older category.[6]

More Aboriginal former students have children.

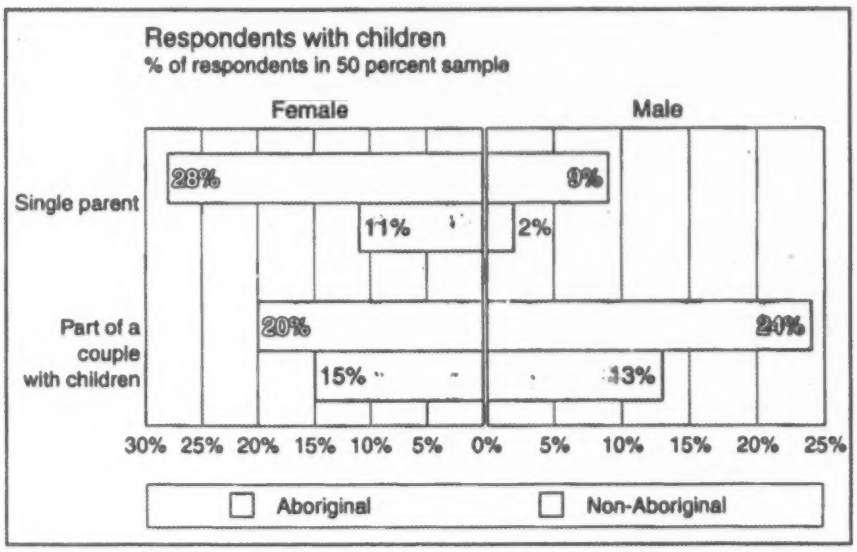
In 1999, a 50 percent sample of survey respondents was asked about their family status. Aboriginal respondents were more likely than non-Aboriginal respondents to be part of a couple. In addition, 43 percent of Aboriginal former students had



6. BC STATS (1998). BC Aboriginals: A Youthful Population. BC STATS Internet site http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/DATA/CEN96/facts/cff9611.pdf November 2000.

one or more children, either as part of a couple or as a single parent, compared with 22 percent of non-Aboriginal former students.

When family status was examined by gender, the above results may be partially explained by a greater female representation among Aboriginal former students—females are more likely to have children. Specifically, 48 percent of female Aboriginal former students had children, compared with 33 percent of male Aboriginal former students. The proportion of female non-Aboriginal former students with children was also greater than that of male non-Aboriginal former students, 26 percent compared with 15 percent.



Where and what did Aboriginal former students study?

Some institutions have higher concentrations of Aboriginal respondents.

Aboriginal former students enrolled at virtually all public colleges and institutes in BC. Two institutions, the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology and the Institute of Indigenous Government, are Aboriginal-governed public post-secondary institutes, and the majority of their students are Aboriginal. (The Institute of Indigenous Government currently does not participate in the College and Institute Outcomes Survey.) Certain other institutions, such as Northwest Community College, had relatively higher concentrations of self-identified Aboriginal respondents, while others, such as Capilano College, had lower concentrations. These differences were likely due to factors such as location or program availability.

Percentage of Aboriginal respondents at surveyed institutions
% of all survey respondents for each institution

Institution	1995	1997	1999
Nicola Valley Institute of Technology	89%	67%	86%
Northwest Community College	15%	16%	19%
College of New Caledonia	6%	5%	10%
University College of the Cariboo	5%	9%	10%
Malaspina University-College	3%	9%	9%
North Island College	6%	8%	8%
Northern Lights College	9%	7%	7%
University College of the Fraser Valley	2%	4%	6%
Camosun College	3%	4%	5%
Okanagan University College	2%	4%	5%
Selkirk College	1%	5%	5%
College of the Rockies	1%	3%	5%
Douglas College	2%	2%	3%
Vancouver Community College	2%	3%	3%
Langara College	2%	1%	3%
Kwantlen University College	1%	2%	2%
Justice Institute of BC	N/A	6%	2%
British Columbia Institute of Technology	1%	2%	2%
Capilano College	2%	4%	2%
Open Learning Agency	N/A	10%	2%
Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design	1%	3%	0%

The highest proportion of Aboriginal former students is in Northern BC.

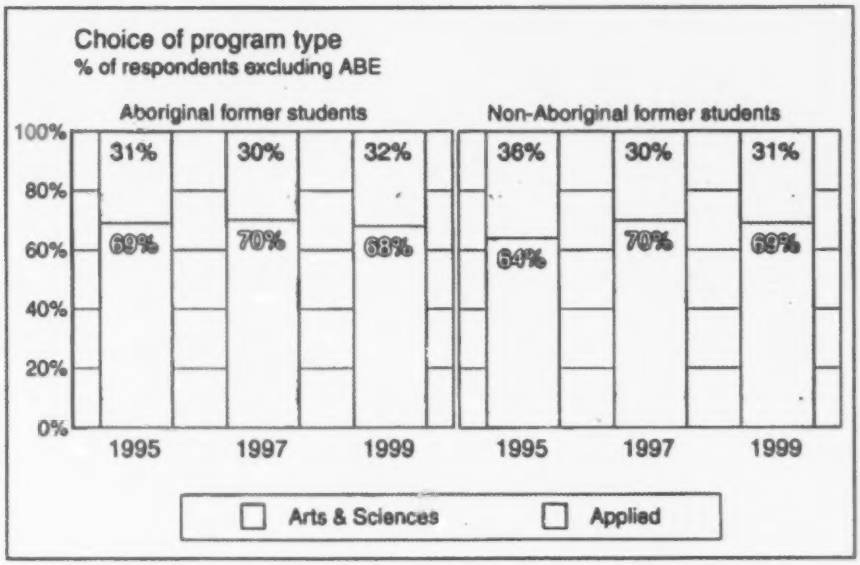
The table below shows the proportion of Aboriginal former students who attended institutions in each of four BC regions. There has been a marginal increase in Aboriginal participation in each region over time. Northern BC has had the highest concentration of Aboriginal respondents, while the Lower Mainland has had the lowest.

Regional concentration of Aboriginal respondents
% for each region

		Interior and Kootenay	Lower Mainland	Northern BC	Vancouver Island
1995	Aboriginal	4%	2%	9%	3%
	Non-Aboriginal	96%	98%	91%	97%
1997	Aboriginal	6%	2%	8%	6%
	Non-Aboriginal	94%	98%	92%	94%
1999	Aboriginal	8%	3%	11%	7%
	Non-Aboriginal	92%	97%	89%	93%

A large proportion of Aboriginal former students are enrolled in ABE courses.

The proportion of Aboriginal former students taking ABE courses was roughly three times higher than that of non-Aboriginal former students. The expanded definition of ABE in 1999 resulted in a considerable increase in Aboriginal respondents who were enrolled in ABE courses, from 21 percent in 1997 to 32 percent in 1999. The distribution of former students across program types when ABE is excluded shows that the proportion of Aboriginal respondents enrolled in Applied and Arts and Science programs has remained relatively stable from 1995 to 1999.



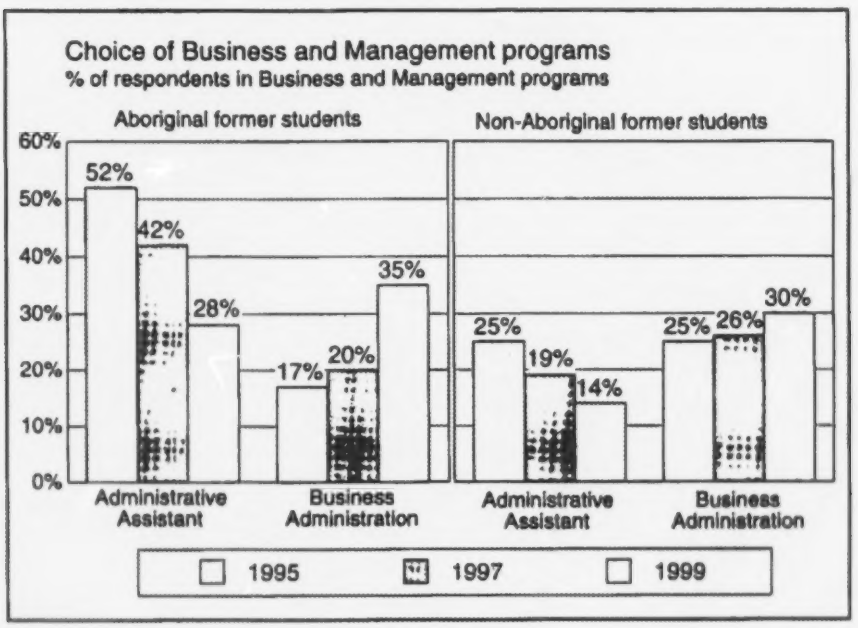
Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal respondents often choose similar Applied programs.

There were no dramatic differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal respondents in the Applied programs they chose to study. Distribution of program selection over time has remained relatively constant.[7] However, Aboriginal former students were more likely to take Legal and Social programs as well as Construction and Precision Production programs. Aboriginal respondents were somewhat less likely to take Engineering, Electrical, and Electronic programs.

The percentage of Applied Aboriginal former students in Business and Management programs (which included Administrative Assistant/Secretarial, Business Administration and Management, Accounting, and Bookkeeping) dropped between 1997 and 1999, from 27 percent to 18 percent, while no decrease was observed for non-Aboriginal former students. This decline was largely due to a drop in Aboriginal former students taking the Administrative Assistant program. In 1995, Administrative Assistant students represented the majority of Aboriginal former students in Business and Management; by 1999, their participation had dropped to just over one quarter. An enrolment drop in this program

7. Please refer to Appendix C for a comparison of Applied programs.

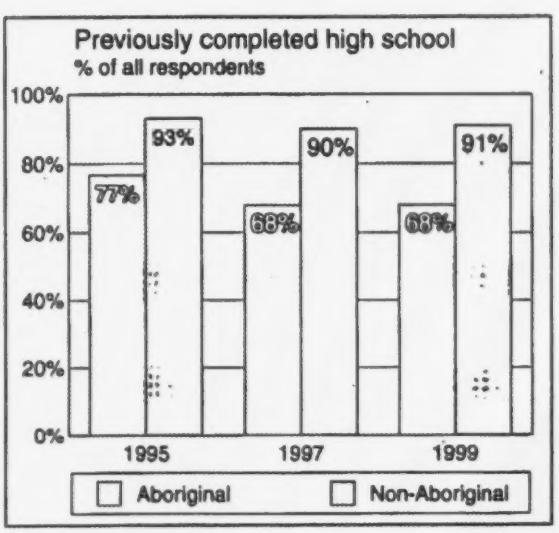
occurred with non-Aboriginal former students as well, although the overall effect was less dramatic. A substantial increase in Aboriginal respondents taking Business Administration was also observed.

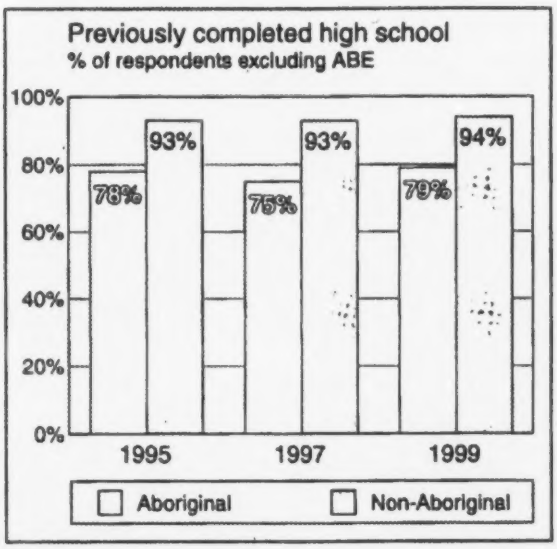


What education did Aboriginal respondents have prior to enrolling in their program of study?

Aboriginal former students have lower rates of high school completion.

Fewer Aboriginal former students were high school graduates compared with non-Aboriginal former students. Comparing data from 1995 to 1999, it appeared that a larger percentage of all former students completed high school in 1995; however, former students from ABE courses were not surveyed that year and a high proportion of these students entered ABE without completing high school.

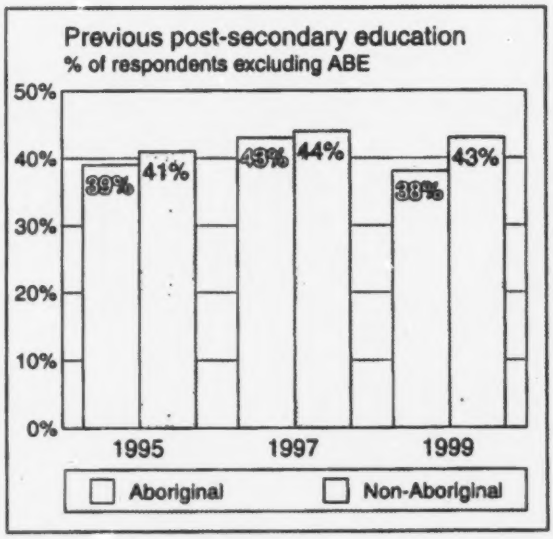




When students who took ABE courses were excluded, the high school completion rate did not appear to change over time for non-Aboriginal former students. The results for Aboriginal students show that there was a slight drop in the completion rate in 1997, although in 1999 it went up again.

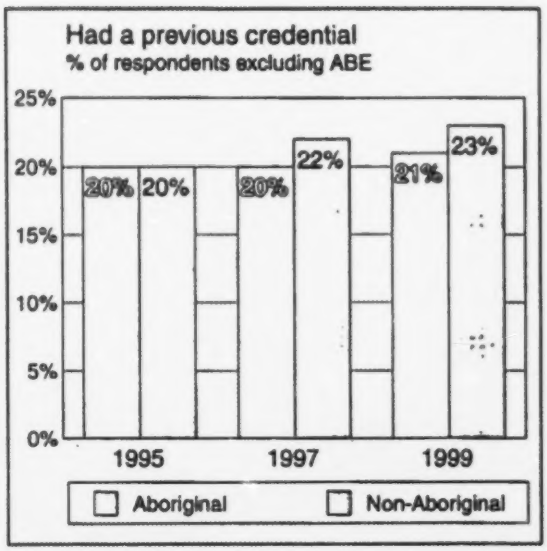
Approximately two out of five Aboriginal respondents had some prior post-secondary education.

Survey respondents were asked if they had taken some post-secondary education prior to enrolling in the program for which they were being surveyed. In 1999, fewer Aboriginal former students indicated they had some post-secondary education than did in 1997. When enrolment in ABE was excluded, the difference still existed for Aboriginal former students.



Previous credential rates have been slightly increasing.

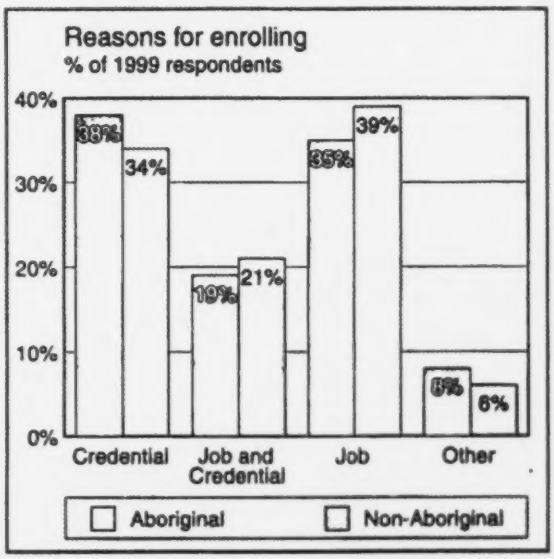
Aboriginal former students were slightly less likely to have a post-secondary credential (certificate, diploma, or degree) before entering their program than non-Aboriginal former students, although the likelihood of having a previous credential has increased slightly for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal respondents. Similar results existed when ABE students were excluded from the analysis.



Why did Aboriginal former students enrol in Colleges and Institutes?

Aboriginal former students are more likely to enrol to obtain a credential than non-Aboriginal former students.

Aboriginal respondents were slightly more likely to report academic or credential-related reasons for enrolling in their program, than were non-Aboriginal former students. In 1999, 57 percent of Aboriginal former students said they enrolled to complete a credential, to prepare to transfer to another institution, or to qualify to enter a program in another field. Non-Aboriginal former students were more likely to cite job-related reasons for enrolling. The job category included improving existing job skills, learning new job skills, deciding on a career, and changing careers.



Trend data are not presented because of year-to-year differences in the way this question was asked and changes in coding categories.

Did Aboriginal former students achieve their main objective?

The majority of respondents feel they have met their most important objective.

In 1999, the majority of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal former students felt they had achieved their reasons for enrolling.

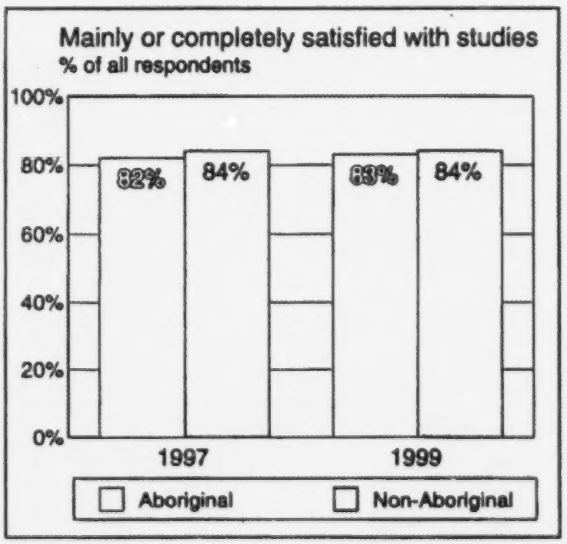
Of those who cited job skills as their reason for enrolling, 81 percent of Aboriginal former students felt they had mostly or completely met their main goal for enrolling, in comparison to 83 percent of non-Aboriginal former students. Further, 60 percent of Aboriginal former students who reported job skills as their reason for enrolling were working, compared with 78 percent of non-Aboriginal former students.

Of those whose reason for enrolling was credential-related, 81 percent of Aboriginal former students felt that they had mostly or completely met their main goal for enrolling, compared to 84 percent of non-Aboriginal former students. As well, 43 percent of Aboriginal respondents who enrolled for credential-related reasons were currently studying, compared to 57 percent of non-Aboriginal respondents.

How satisfied are Aboriginal former students with their studies?

The majority of former students are satisfied with their studies.

There was little difference in reported satisfaction levels between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal respondents.



Respondents say Aboriginal content in the curriculum could be improved.

When asked how the training they received and their overall experience could be improved, several Aboriginal students commented on the Aboriginal content in the curriculum. Among the comments were the following:

"Increase Elders input."

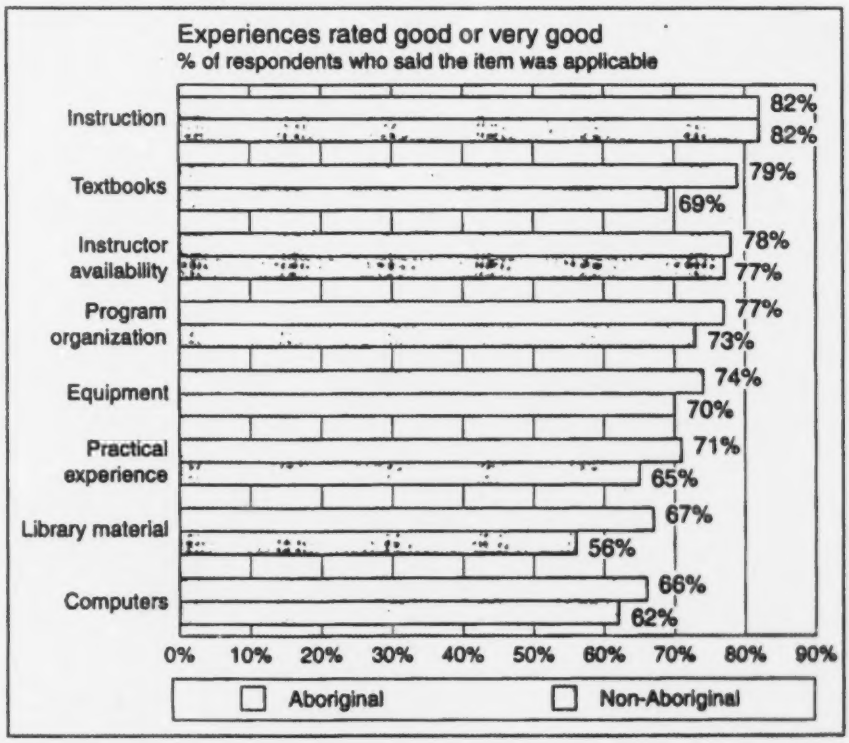
"Put in a more accurate account of our history."

"Teach more traditional aspects of belief and values."

How do Aboriginal former students rate their learning environment and educational experience?

Aboriginal former students give high ratings to their college experience.

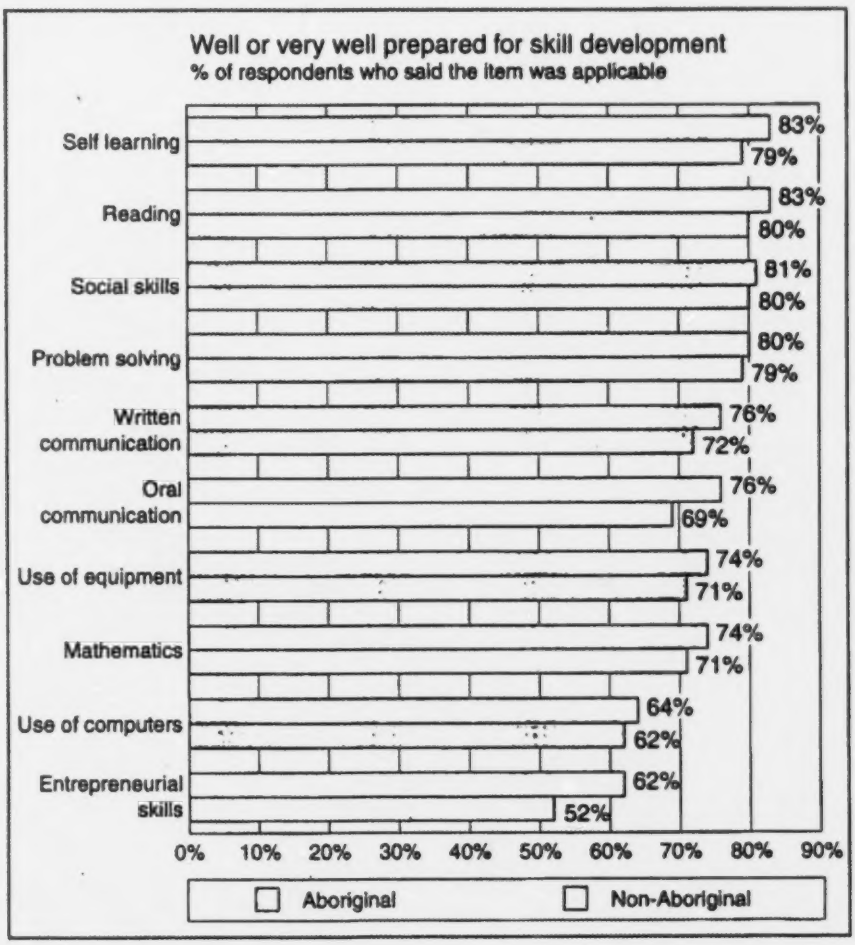
The following sections on college experience and skill development do not include a trend analysis. In 1995 and 1997, the questions regarding college experience were rated on a three-point scale, whereas the question was rated on a five-point scale in 1999.[8] A higher percentage of Aboriginal former students rated their college experiences good or very good, compared to non-Aboriginal former students.



8. Please refer to Appendix D for more detail on the ratings given to these questions for 1995, 1997, and 1999.

Aboriginal respondents are also very satisfied with their opportunity to develop skills.

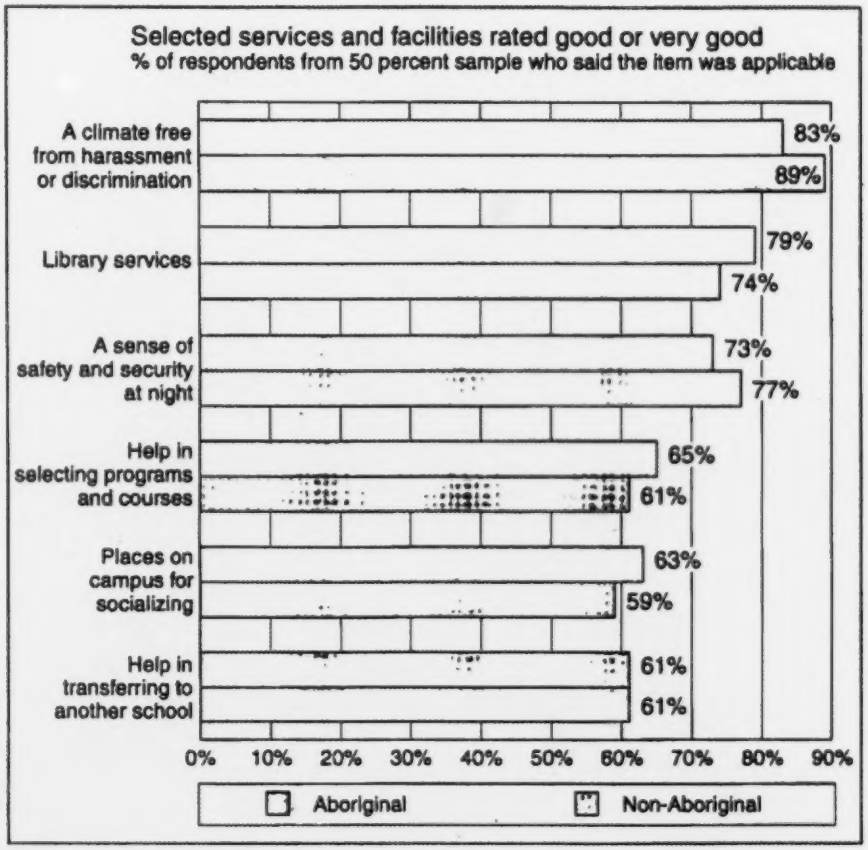
Aboriginal former students were also more satisfied with the opportunities provided by their program to develop skills, particularly oral communication, entrepreneurial skills, and written communication.



Aboriginal former students are mostly satisfied with their college services and facilities.

In the 1999 student outcomes survey, half of all respondents were asked to rate services and facilities at their institutions and campuses.[9] Once again, Aboriginal former students gave somewhat higher ratings than non-Aboriginal former students to many services. They gave marginally lower ratings to a climate free from harassment or discrimination and a sense of safety and security at night.

9. For ratings of all institutional and campus services see the forthcoming special report on student services at http://outcomes.ceiss.org/Publications/



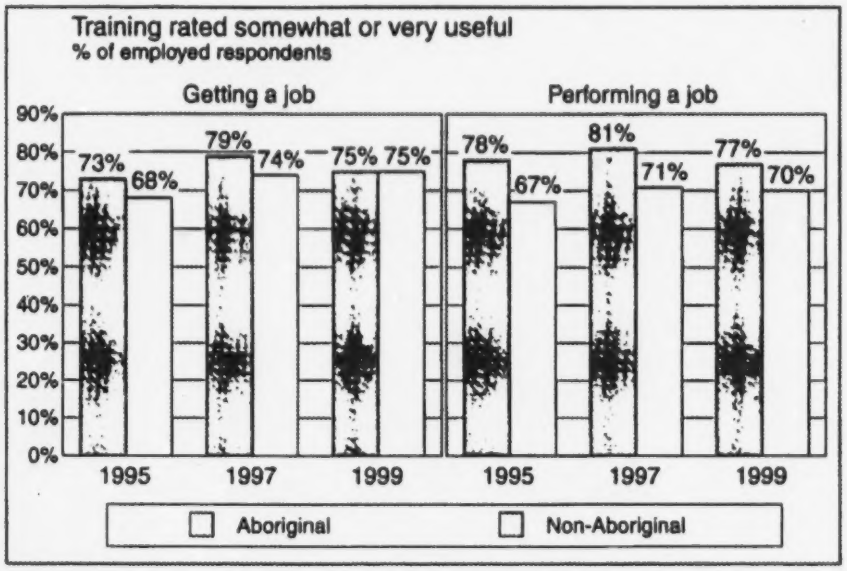
Aboriginal former students give higher ratings than non-Aboriginal former students.

Overall, Aboriginal former students tended to rate most aspects of their learning environment and educational experience somewhat higher than their non-Aboriginal counterparts. Contributing to this result may be the large proportion of Aboriginal former students in ABE, since this group also tends to rate their experience higher than Applied or Arts and Sciences former students.

How do Aboriginal former students rate their preparation for employment and further education?

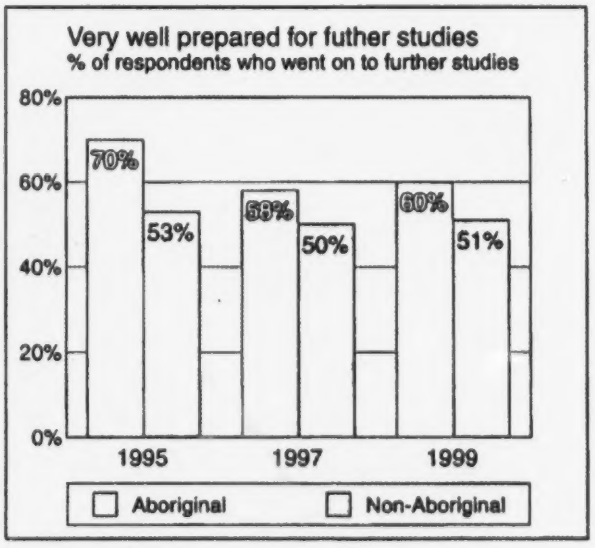
Aboriginal former students say their training helped them get a job.

In 1995, more employed Aboriginal former students than non-Aboriginal former students felt that their training had been somewhat or very useful in getting their jobs, although that difference was non-existent in 1999. There was a greater difference between how Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal respondents rated the usefulness of their training when it came to performing their jobs.



Aboriginal respondents are more likely to report being well prepared for further studies.

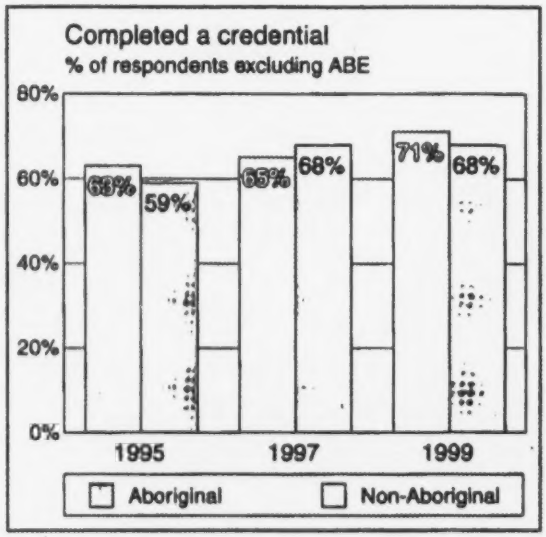
Of the respondents who went on to further studies, Aboriginal former students were more likely to report feeling very well prepared for further study, compared to non-Aboriginal former students.



How do credential completion rates compare?

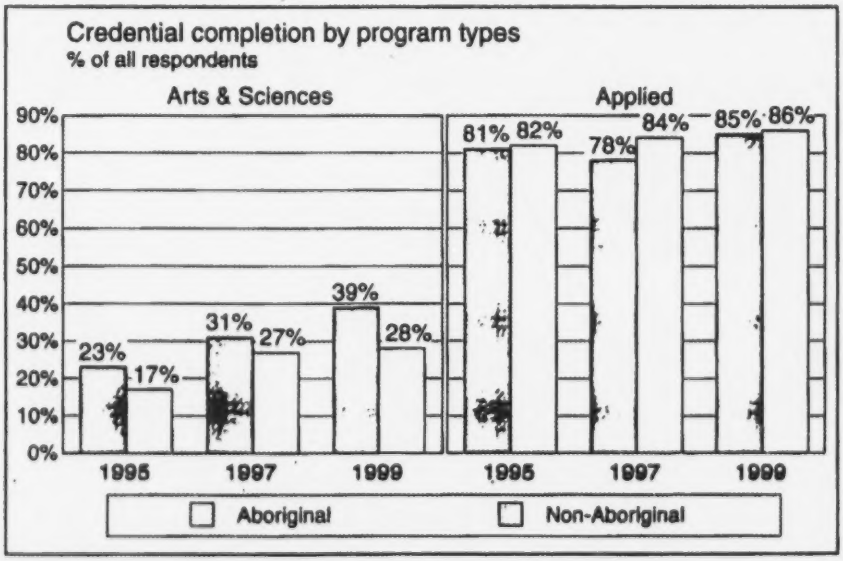
Completed credential rates have been increasing.

Former students were asked if they had completed the requirements for a credential (certificate, diploma, degree) when they left their institution. When ABE is excluded, completed credential rates have increased for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal former students.[10]



Aboriginal former students in Arts and Sciences programs are more likely than non-Aboriginal former students to complete a credential.

An examination of credential completion rates by program type showed that Aboriginal former students in Arts and Sciences programs were more likely to complete a credential than their non-Aboriginal counterparts. In general, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal former Applied students had high credential completion rates. For non-Aboriginal former students, Applied completion rates had been increasing, but there was no clear trend for Aboriginal former students.

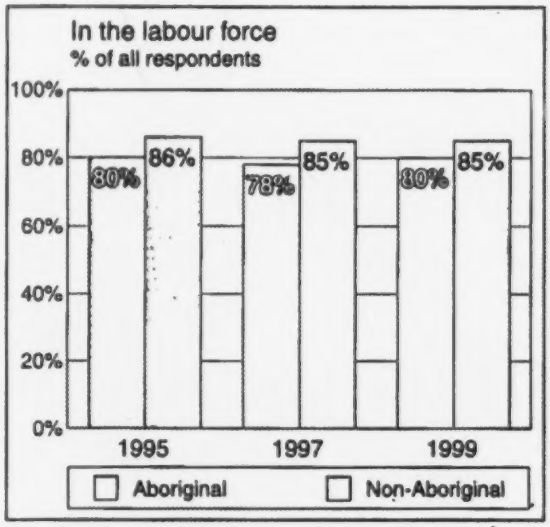


10. Since former Adult Basic Education students may be taking individual courses instead of being in programs that offer a credential, it is appropriate to remove them from this calculation.

What are the employment outcomes of Aboriginal former students?

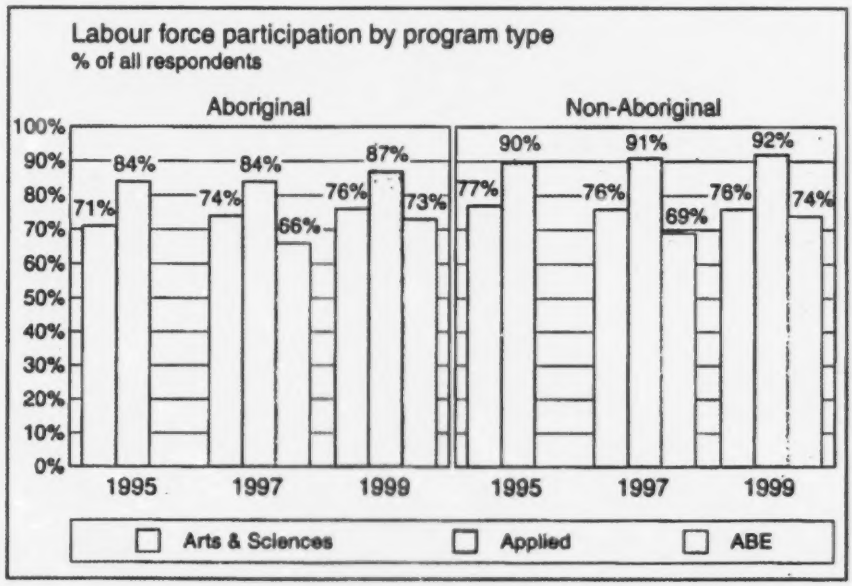
Aboriginal respondents are less likely to be in the labour force.

Aboriginal former students were less likely to be in the labour force than non-Aboriginal former students; the labour force includes those who are employed and those who are looking for work.



Respondents from Applied programs are more likely to enter the labour force.

Examining labour force participation by program type showed that the proportion of Aboriginal former students in the labour force had increased over time, for all program types.



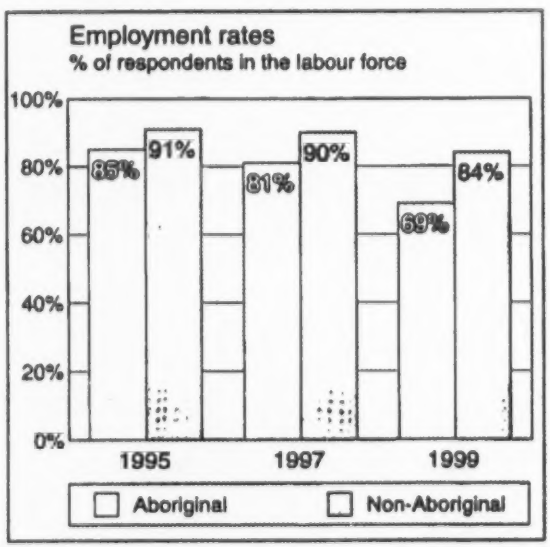
The percentage of those who were not in the labour force and were studying at the time of the survey has been increasing for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal former students.

Many former students cited family responsibilities as a reason why they did not participate in the labour force. Since Aboriginal respondents were more likely to have children, this may help explain why they did not enter the labour force at the same rate as non-Aboriginal respondents.

Aboriginal former students are less likely to be employed.

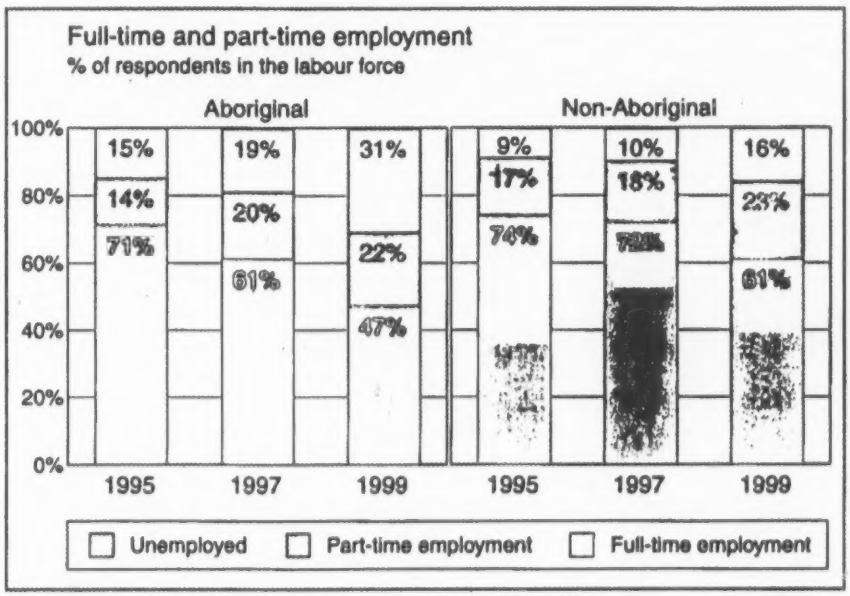
Aboriginal respondents in the labour force are less likely to be employed. While the percentage employed of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal respondents has been decreasing since 1995, the drop for Aboriginal respondents has been more dramatic.

In 1999, Aboriginal former students were almost twice as likely as their non-Aboriginal counterparts to be unemployed (31% and 16% respectively).



Aboriginal former students are less likely to be employed full-time.

A larger proportion of non-Aboriginal respondents were working full-time compared to Aboriginal respondents, where full-time is defined as working at least 30 hours per week. There was little difference between the part-time employment rates of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal respondents.

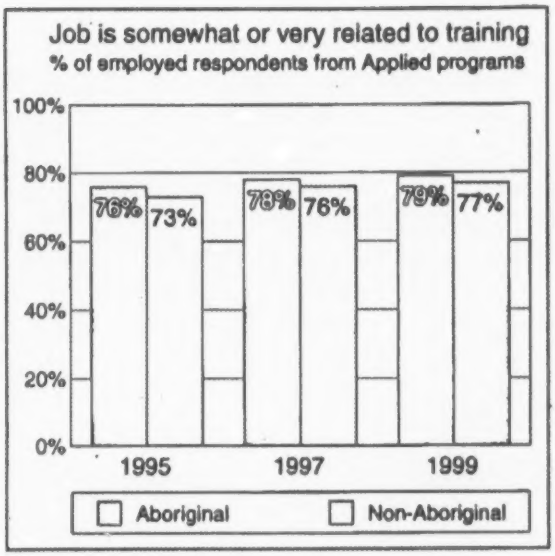


The availability of employment is a factor which contributes to employment rates for former students—one which the outcomes survey cannot speak to directly. Nevertheless, it is clear that the percentage of Aboriginal former students differs by region and family status and these differences may reasonably affect the availability and access to employment. For instance, the smallest percentage of Aboriginal former students was located in the lower mainland—one of the regions within BC with the lowest unemployment indicators according to BC Stats. It is possible that there simply were not as many full-time employment opportunities available to those living in smaller, more isolated communities, such as in Northern BC. It may also be that those with children were less able to work full-time, especially single parents.

A majority of employed students report that their job is related to the training they took.

Aboriginal former students in Applied programs were more likely than non-Aboriginal former students to say that their job was somewhat or very related to their training. The percentage of respondents reporting training-related employment has increased slightly since 1995, for both groups.

Of Applied former students who, in 1999, cited job skills as their reason for enrolling, approximately three-quarters of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal respondents said their job was somewhat or very related to their training.



Former students enter a variety of occupations.

Using the National Occupational Classification (NOC) coding system, it was found that the most common occupations for Aboriginal former students in 1999 were in areas such as Community and Social Service Workers, Nurse Aides and Orderlies, Visiting Homemakers and Housekeepers, Retail Salespersons, and General Office Clerks.

Non-Aboriginal respondents were most likely to be in the following occupations: Retail Salespersons, Food & Beverage Servers, Registered Nurses, Nurse Aides and Orderlies, and General Office Clerks. It should be noted that while these were the occupations reported by the greatest number of respondents, collectively, far more respondents chose occupations that are not named here.[11]

A skill level is assigned to each NOC based on the amount and type of education and training required to enter and perform the duties for that specific occupation. In 1999, 38 percent of employed Aboriginal former students were in jobs that required a college-equivalent skill level, 35 percent were at a secondary-equivalent skill level, and 11 percent were at a university-equivalent skill level. A smaller percentage of non-Aboriginal respondents were in jobs that required a college-equivalent skill level (31%); greater proportions were at the secondary school skill level (40%) and at the university skill level (13%).

11. Please refer to Appendix E for further information on NOC and the most common occupations, including training-related occupations.

Median salaries for Arts and Sciences students are increasing.

For Aboriginal former Arts and Sciences students in full-time training-related occupations, the median salary level has increased since 1995. Aboriginal former students from Arts and Sciences programs tended to have higher median salaries than Arts and Sciences non-Aboriginal former students. There was no clear trend with Aboriginal respondents' full-time training-related median salaries in Applied programs. Non-Aboriginal former students from Applied programs had higher median salaries, except in 1997, where the median salaries were the same. For non-Aboriginal former students in both Applied and Arts and Sciences programs, there was an increase in median salaries.

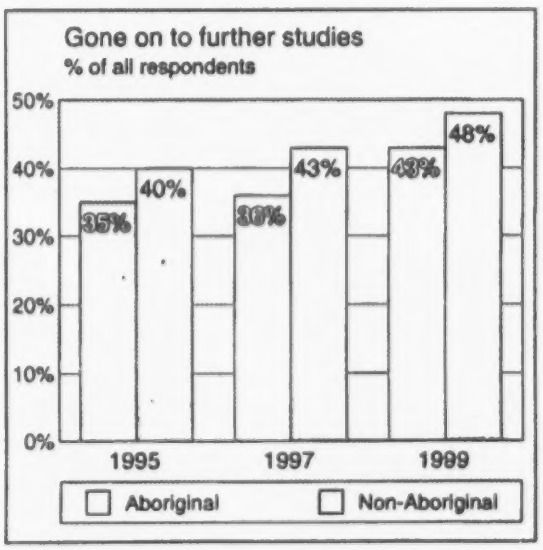
Median monthly full-time gross salary, by program type
% of respondents with training-related occupations

	Aboriginal full-time monthly median salary	Non-Aboriginal full-time monthly median salary
1995		
Arts & Sciences	$2060	$2080
Applied	$2250	$2400
1997		
Arts & Sciences	$2340	$2200
Applied	$2500	$2500
ABE	$1630	$2000
1999		
Arts & Sciences	$2670	$2250
Applied	$2410	$2620
ABE	$2360	$2080

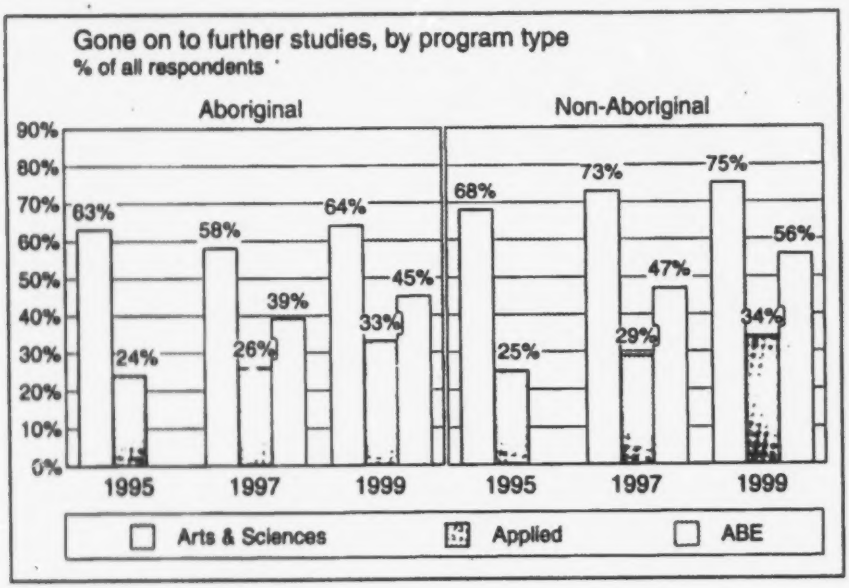
Are Aboriginal former students pursuing further education?

Aboriginal respondents are increasingly likely to go on to further education.

Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal former students are increasingly likely to go on to further education. Further education includes those who have gone on to study at another institution, as well as those who are still at the same institution in a different program.

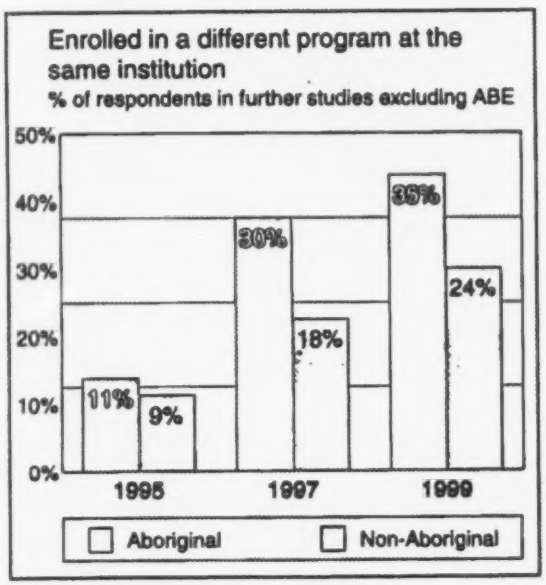


The rate of going on to further studies has increased for Aboriginal respondents in Applied and ABE programs. However, there was little difference in the rate of further studies between 1995 and 1999 for Aboriginal former students in Arts and Sciences programs. For non-Aboriginal respondents, each year a higher percentage went on to further studies in all program types.



Aboriginal respondents are more likely to take further education at the same institution.

Over the 1995 to 1999 survey period, the rate of taking further education at the same institution has been increasing. At the time of the survey, Aboriginal former students who went on to further education were more likely than non-Aboriginal former students to have been enrolled in a different program at the same institution.



How did Aboriginal former students finance their studies?[12]

Employment is the most-often cited source of funding.

Respondents to the finance section of the 1999 questionnaire (about half of the total number of respondents) were asked to rate different sources of funding as very, somewhat, or not important.

Sources of funding
% of respondents in 50 percent sample

Aboriginal Respondents

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Other/ Depends
Personal savings	27%	22%	50%	1%
Employment while studying	19%	19%	60%	1%
Summer/break employment	37%	21%	41%	0%
Free room and board	27%	10%	62%	1%
Financial support from family	23%	15%	61%	1%
Loans from family	8%	7%	84%	1%
Personal bank loan	13%	13%	73%	1%
Government student loan/grant	27%	4%	68%	1%
Scholarship or bursary	22%	12%	65%	1%
Other funding from government	25%	5%	69%	1%

Non-Aboriginal Respondents

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Other/ Depends
Personal savings	40%	25%	35%	0%
Employment while studying	34%	21%	45%	0%
Summer/break employment	45%	21%	34%	0%
Free room and board	40%	10%	49%	1%
Financial support from family	33%	16%	50%	1%
Loans from family	9%	8%	82%	1%
Personal bank loan	11%	13%	75%	1%
Government student loan/grant	29%	5%	66%	1%
Scholarship or bursary	18%	15%	66%	1%
Other funding from government	11%	5%	83%	1%

Aboriginal former students relied less on their families, either through direct financial support or indirectly with free room and board. Non-Aboriginal former students tended to rate personal savings and employment (either while studying or during the summer) higher than Aboriginal former students. Aboriginal respondents were more likely to say that government funding (other than student loans) was important.

12. For a more in-depth look at student finances, including additional analyses of Aboriginal former students, please see the forthcoming special report on student finances at http://outcomes.ceiss.org/Publications/

Fewer Aboriginal former students have debt, but their debt is higher.

Aboriginal former students cited government loans and grants as an important source of funding less often than non-Aboriginal former students. However, for Aboriginal respondents with student loan debt,[13] the average was $14,080 compared to $9,700 for non-Aboriginal respondents.

Respondents to this section of the survey were also asked to specify "other" sources of funding. It was under this "other" category that one-quarter of Aboriginal students cited band funding as an important source of financial support. This figure may under represent those who used band funding, since the respondents were not asked the question specifically.

More Aboriginal former students relocate to study.

Aboriginal former students were more likely than non-Aboriginal former students to relocate from their home communities to attend their institution: 29 percent compared with only 19 percent. One-quarter of Aboriginal former students reported having to interrupt their studies for financial reasons, compared to 15 percent of non-Aboriginal students. Both groups took part or all of their programs on a part-time basis for financial reasons at the same rate (18%).

What challenges do Aboriginal former students face?

Fewer Aboriginal students experience a climate free from harassment and discrimination.

Aboriginal former students were less likely to report experiencing a climate free from harassment or discrimination than were non-Aboriginal former students. Nevertheless, this item was ranked highly by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal respondents: 83 percent and 89 percent respectively.

The following comments from Aboriginal respondents are representative of this concern about harassment and discrimination.

"If there was a better knowledge of First Nations there would be more tolerance."

"There were some attitudes and opinions towards First Nations that I found inappropriate."

13. Student loan debt (i.e., the loan amount after remission) is reported for those who had student loans only (no grants).

More Aboriginal students have family responsibilities.

One challenge that Aboriginal former students appear to face more often than non-Aboriginal former students is that of balancing family and work or study. As mentioned previously, Aboriginal former students were more likely to have children. This may contribute to the lower labour force participation, as well as lower employment rates. These family responsibilities may make it more difficult to find the time and energy to concentrate on school. Several Aboriginal respondents' comments recorded during the 1999 survey dealt with this issue:

"I'm a single mom, with twin boys, and they have a lot of health problems, so I can't really work at this time. But I do hope when they go to school, I will start looking for work."

"More day care available, more on campus day care. Then more people could go."

"Start gearing programs toward single parents — work with social services to get a baby sitting agency for single parents so single parent can study and have time to do homework."

"They should find out more about the students. Academic counselors should take into consideration all aspects of their lives before they tell them what they should take. Tell them what they need to handle instead of what they should take. My GPA came down because I was working full-time and have a family."

Their suggestions for improving services included better and more day care facilities, increased tutoring and individual attention, better instructors, better administrative services (e.g., for registration and complaints), and more student services.

Conclusion

Report purpose

This report was written at the request of the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology to provide insight into the experiences and outcomes of Aboriginal former students. Government priorities for Aboriginal students include increasing access, participation, and retention and improving outcomes. Comparing results from the 1995, 1997, and 1999 College and Institute Student Outcomes surveys shows that progress has been made in many areas.

Achievements

Participation of Aboriginal former students in the Student Outcomes Survey has increased since 1995. In 1999, the proportion of Aboriginal survey respondents exceeded the percentage of people identified as Aboriginal in the BC population. The percentages of Aboriginal former students from institutions in BC regions outside the lower mainland have grown steadily between 1995 and 1999.

More Aboriginal former students than ever are completing the requirements for a credential. Credential completion has increased since 1995, particularly for those Aboriginal former students in Arts and Sciences programs.

Many more Aboriginal former students are going on to further education. Aboriginal respondents from all programs are now more likely to continue their studies; substantially more from Applied programs are now going on to further education than did in 1995.

The majority of Aboriginal former students participate in the labour force. Since 1995 labour force participation has increased steadily for Aboriginal respondents from all programs, although a slightly higher increase was shown among students from Arts and Sciences programs. In 1999, employed Aboriginal respondents were somewhat more likely than 1995 respondents to say their job was related to their training. For Aboriginal former students who were working in occupations that were related to their training, median salaries have increased steadily, especially for those from Arts and Sciences programs.

Challenges

While many outcomes have improved for Aboriginal former students over the period surveyed, this group still faces some unique challenges. Unemployment has increased for all respondents to the survey; however, Aboriginal students have experienced a substantial drop in full-time employment over the survey period and a corresponding increase in unemployment.

Although there is evidence to suggest that a slightly smaller percentage of Aboriginal former students rely on government student loans, for those respondents who incur student loan debt, their debt burden is significantly heavier than that of non-Aboriginal respondents.

Aboriginal former students are somewhat more likely to cite issues of discrimination and harassment while studying than non-Aboriginal former students.

And finally, Aboriginal former students are more likely than other students to face the challenge of trying to study and raise children at the same time. The fact that this group of students has, on average, more children may have an impact on participation and completion rates. It may affect employment rates, as well.

Student assessment

Overall, Aboriginal former students are very satisfied with their educational experience. Since 1995, a majority of employed Aboriginal respondents have consistently reported that their education prepared them very well for getting and performing their jobs. Likewise a majority of former students who continued their education felt they had been well prepared for further studies.

Appendix A

About the Student Outcomes Survey Project

The BC College and Institute Student Outcomes Survey Project collects and disseminates information about former students' post-secondary experiences and their subsequent labour market and further education participation. The Student Outcomes Survey is administered annually to a number of former students of public colleges, university colleges, and institutes in British Columbia. The findings serve to guide educational choices for future students, to demonstrate the success of the college and institute system in achieving its mandate, and to provide a solid basis for educational planning decisions.

This report is based on data from the Student Outcomes Survey conducted in the spring of 1999. Former students were contacted by telephone 9 to 15 months after completing all, or a significant portion, of their educational program. Input was received from 16,681 former students from 21 public colleges and institutes; this represents 49 percent of the targeted 33,852 former students.

Participating Institutions:

British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT)
Camosun College (CAM)
Capilano College (CAP)
College of New Caledonia (CNC)
College of the Rockies (COTR)
Douglas College (DGL)
Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design (ECIAD)
Justice Institute of BC (JINST)
Kwantlen University College (KWN)
Langara College (LANG)
Malaspina University-College (MAL)
Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (NVIT)
North Island College (NIC)
Northern Lights College (NLC)
Northwest Community College (NWCC)
Okanagan University College (OKN)
Open Learning Agency (OLA)
Selkirk College (SEL)
University College of the Cariboo (CAR)
University College of the Fraser Valley (FVAL)
Vancouver Community College (VCC)

The project is conducted with funding from the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology (MAETT) and British Columbia's public colleges, university colleges, and institutes. The British Columbia Outcomes Working Group (OWG) oversees all aspects of the project, from data collection through to the reporting of survey results. The OWG is a decade-old partnership among MAETT, colleges, university colleges, and institutes, and system bodies, such as the Advanced Education Council of British Columbia and the BC Council on Admissions and Transfer.

Appendix B

Glossary

Adult Basic Education programs

Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs are defined as those that provide education in predominantly "academic" subjects at the secondary school level or below. For the College and Institute Student Outcomes Survey, ABE programs are defined to include students who have taken at least three courses. In 1999, this definition was expanded to include those taking one or two courses at a sample of institutions.

Applied programs

Applied programs include all programs that are designed to lead to employment in a relatively specific field. For this survey, they include programs of 0–6 months, 7–12 months, 13–36 months, and the upper level (3rd and 4th year) of applied baccalaureate programs. All applied programs, e.g., engineering, business, nursing, education, social work, and criminology, are included regardless of whether the courses in the programs carry transfer credit.

Arts and Sciences programs

Arts and Sciences programs include programs which lead to a 2-year associate degree or a 4-year baccalaureate degree or programs consisting of courses in the liberal arts, humanities, social or physical sciences.

Cohort

The 21 participating colleges, institutes, and university colleges identified *former students* for participation in the survey. These students completed all, or the majority, of their program of study.

Former students

This is the group of students who are included in the survey population. To be included in this group, students must have:

- earned a certificate or diploma; OR
- completed 75% of the credits required for a two year applied program; OR
- completed 100% of the credits required for a one year applied program; OR
- completed at least 24 credits of an arts and sciences program; OR
- completed at least 3 ABE courses (or 1 course in 1999);

AND

- not been enrolled in their college or institute program after February of the survey year.

Labour force

The labour force includes people who are employed and those who are looking for work.

Appendix C

Comparison of program areas of respondents within the Applied program type

Aboriginal Respondents
% of respondents from Applied programs

	1995	1997	1999
Agriculture, Natural Resources and Science	4%	4%	6%
Business and Management	25%	27%	18%
Communications	1%	0%	1%
Computer and Information Services	1%	0%	1%
Construction and Precision Production	12%	10%	14%
Education and Library Science	6%	7%	8%
Engineering, Electrical and Electronics	4%	5%	3%
Health Related	3%	2%	2%
Legal and Social	13%	12%	13%
Mechanical and Related	7%	7%	6%
Nursing	10%	12%	12%
Recreation, Tourism, Hospitality and Service	9%	7%	10%
Transportation	3%	4%	3%
Visual, Performing and Fine Arts	4%	3%	4%

Non-Aboriginal Respondents
% of respondents from Applied programs

	1995	1997	1999
Agriculture, Natural Resources and Science	3%	4%	4%
Business and Management	24%	24%	26%
Communications	1%	1%	1%
Computer and Information Services	2%	2%	3%
Construction and Precision Production	9%	8%	7%
Education and Library Science	6%	5%	5%
Engineering, Electrical and Electronics	7%	9%	8%
Health Related	6%	5%	5%
Legal and Social	7%	8%	8%
Mechanical and Related	9%	8%	7%
Nursing	11%	11%	11%
Recreation, Tourism, Hospitality and Service	7%	8%	8%
Transportation	2%	2%	1%
Visual, Performing and Fine Arts	5%	5%	5%

Appendix D

How former students rate their learning environment and experience

College Experiences

Former students were asked to rate certain aspects of their program, such as quality of instruction and the amount of practical experience. The rating categories were very good, good, adequate, poor, very poor.

Not Applicable

A similar percentage of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal former students said that computers, teacher contact, library material, practical experiences, program organization, teaching, and textbooks were not applicable to them. An exception was an item concerning the quality of tools and equipment other than computers, where 29 percent of Aboriginal former students said it was not applicable, compared to 25 percent of non-Aboriginal former students.

Aboriginal Respondents – 1999

% of respondents who said the item was applicable

	Very Good	Good	Adequate	Poor	Very Poor	Not Applicable
Computers	27%	39%	23%	8%	3%	33%
Equipment	25%	49%	23%	3%	0%	29%
Teacher Contact	46%	32%	14%	6%	2%	6%
Library Material	32%	35%	22%	9%	2%	15%
Practical Experiences	29%	42%	21%	7%	1%	13%
Program Organization	32%	45%	17%	5%	2%	0%
Teaching	44%	38%	14%	2%	1%	1%
Textbooks	34%	45%	17%	4%	1%	1%

Non-Aboriginal Respondents- 1999

% of respondents who said the item was applicable

	Very Good	Good	Adequate	Poor	Very Poor	Not Applicable
Computers	23%	39%	25%	10%	3%	35%
Equipment	22%	48%	25%	4%	1%	25%
Teacher Contact	44%	34%	15%	5%	1%	6%
Library Material	19%	37%	29%	12%	2%	17%
Practical Experiences	29%	36%	24%	10%	2%	12%
Program Organization	28%	45%	20%	6%	1%	1%
Teaching	38%	44%	14%	3%	1%	0%
Textbooks	22%	47%	25%	5%	1%	1%

College Experience (continued)

1997

	Aboriginal				Non-Aboriginal			
	Good	Adequate	Poor	N/A	Good	Adequate	Poor	N/A
Computers	55%	30%	15%	30%	43%	40%	17%	34%
Counseling	55%	32%	32%	17%	46%	38%	15%	22%
Equipment	55%	38%	7%	27%	51%	41%	8%	29%
Teacher Contact	65%	27%	8%	3%	68%	25%	7%	5%
Library Material	55%	31%	14%	10%	46%	39%	15%	12%
Practical Experiences	58%	30%	12%	11%	49%	35%	16%	11%
Program Organization	67%	27%	7%	0%	59%	33%	7%	0%
Teaching	76%	21%	3%	0%	69%	28%	4%	0%
Library Services	69%	23%	7%	12%	61%	33%	6%	12%
Social Places	56%	33%	11%	9%	48%	38%	13%	10%
Study Areas	63%	28%	9%	7%	54%	36%	10%	7%
Textbooks	60%	33%	7%	1%	54%	40%	7%	1%

1995

	Aboriginal				Non-Aboriginal			
	Good	Adequate	Poor	N/A	Good	Adequate	Poor	N/A
Computers	51%	34%	15%	40%	44%	39%	17%	44%
Counseling	54%	33%	13%	24%	43%	39%	18%	27%
Equipment	58%	33%	8%	33%	51%	41%	8%	37%
Teacher Contact	65%	27%	8%	5%	68%	24%	7%	4%
Library Material	55%	30%	15%	14%	47%	37%	16%	14%
Practical Experiences	53%	33%	15%	11%	48%	36%	17%	11%
Program Organization	62%	31%	7%	0%	57%	34%	9%	1%
Teaching	71%	26%	4%	0%	68%	28%	4%	0%
Social Places	50%	33%	17%	11%	45%	39%	17%	11%
Study Areas	56%	30%	13%	7%	52%	36%	13%	8%
Textbooks	61%	32%	7%	1%	54%	39%	7%	1%

Skill Development

Former students were asked to rate the extent to which their program provided them with the opportunity to develop skills. The rating categories were very well, well, adequately, poorly, very poorly.

Not Applicable

A similar percentage of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal former students said that mathematics, oral communication, problem solving, reading, self learning, social skills, and use of computers were not applicable to them. A higher percentage of non-Aboriginal respondents said that entrepreneurial skills, oral communication skills, and written communication skills were not applicable to them (47%, 22%, and 18%, respectively, compared to 44%, 17%, and 13% of Aboriginal respondents). With respect to the use of equipment, a higher percentage of Aboriginal respondents indicated that it was not applicable (31%) compared with non-Aboriginal respondents (27%).

Aboriginal - 1999

	Very Well	Well	Adequately	Poorly	Very Poorly	Not Applicable
Mathematics	39%	35%	19%	6%	1%	31%
Entrepreneurial skills	23%	39%	26%	10%	2%	44%
Oral Communication	31%	45%	22%	2%	0%	17%
Problem Solving	44%	36%	18%	2%	0%	5%
Reading	41%	42%	15%	2%	0%	5%
Self Learning	44%	39%	14%	4%	0%	5%
Social Skills	48%	33%	16%	2%	0%	7%
Use of Computers	35%	29%	24%	9%	3%	37%
Use of Equipment	38%	36%	19%	5%	1%	31%
Written Communication	36%	40%	21%	3%	0%	13%

Non-Aboriginal - 1999

	Very Well	Well	Adequately	Poorly	Very Poorly	Not Applicable
Mathematics	33%	38%	23%	5%	1%	32%
Entrepreneurial skills	17%	35%	33%	13%	2%	47%
Oral Communication	27%	42%	27%	4%	1%	22%
Problem Solving	39%	40%	18%	2%	0%	4%
Reading	36%	44%	18%	2%	0%	6%
Self Learning	37%	42%	18%	2%	0%	5%
Social Skills	41%	39%	17%	2%	0%	9%
Use of Computers	31%	31%	25%	11%	3%	37%
Use of Equipment	34%	37%	24%	5%	1%	27%
Written Communication	29%	43%	25%	3%	1%	18%

Skill Development (continued)

1997

	Aboriginal				Non-Aboriginal			
	Well	Adequately	Poorly	N/A	Well	Adequately	Poorly	N/A
Mathematics	56%	35%	9%	27%	54%	37%	9%	32%
Entrepreneur	35%	47%	19%	42%	30%	47%	23%	49%
Oral Communication	60%	37%	3%	14%	50%	45%	5%	24%
Problem Solving	64%	33%	3%	4%	61%	36%	3%	5%
Reading	61%	36%	3%	12%	54%	42%	4%	21%
Self Learning	60%	35%	5%	5%	54%	42%	5%	8%
Social Skills	71%	26%	3%	7%	64%	33%	3%	9%
Use of Computers	49%	31%	20%	36%	42%	36%	22%	40%
Use of Equipment	55%	36%	9%	33%	53%	37%	9%	35%
Written Communication	58%	38%	4%	11%	55%	41%	5%	20%

1995

	Aboriginal				Non-Aboriginal			
	Well	Adequately	Poorly	N/A	Well	Adequately	Poorly	N/A
Mathematics	51%	39%	10%	37%	49%	39%	12%	42%
Oral Communication	58%	37%	6%	7%	49%	44%	8%	12%
Problem Solving	51%	41%	7%	7%	51%	42%	6%	8%
Self Learning	58%	38%	5%	6%	50%	44%	6%	7%
Social Skills	57%	39%	4%	6%	52%	43%	5%	10%
Use of Computers	47%	34%	19%	44%	43%	36%	22%	46%
Use of Equipment	58%	33%	9%	42%	53%	37%	10%	43%
Written Communication	56%	40%	5%	8%	50%	45%	6%	12%

College Services and Facilities

In 1999, former students were asked to evaluate various services and facilities in terms of how well their needs were met. The rating categories were very good, good, adequate, poor, very poor.

Not Applicable

A higher percentage of Aboriginal former students said that food services and recreation facilities were not applicable, compared to non-Aboriginal former students. A higher percentage of non-Aboriginal respondents reported that help in selecting programs and courses, availability of courses, drop-in computer workstations, financial aid services, and public transit were not applicable to them.

Aboriginal

	Very Good	Good	Adequate	Poor	Very Poor	N/A
Help in Selecting Programs and Courses	25%	40%	24%	7%	4%	12%
Availability of Courses	17%	44%	24%	13%	3%	3%
Registration Procedures	22%	44%	26%	6%	3%	1%
Classroom Facilities	24%	44%	24%	7%	1%	0%
Drop-in Computer Work Stations	23%	39%	22%	13%	4%	24%
Places to Study	26%	36%	23%	13%	2%	5%
A Climate Free from Harassment or Discrimination	49%	34%	12%	3%	3%	3%
Library Services	36%	43%	12%	7%	2%	8%
Financial Aid Services	33%	43%	17%	5%	2%	43%
Food Services	21%	48%	20%	7%	4%	14%
Recreation Facilities	15%	39%	22%	17%	7%	46%
Places on Campus for Socializing	20%	43%	23%	11%	3%	18%
A Sense of Safety and Security at Night	32%	41%	18%	7%	2%	22%
Condition of Buildings and Grounds	35%	49%	11%	4%	1%	1%
Parking	12%	29%	22%	25%	11%	10%
Public Transit	26%	44%	13%	11%	6%	43%
Help in Finding Employment After Program	16%	26%	19%	29%	11%	47%
Help in Transferring to Another School	19%	42%	21%	13%	5%	64%

Non-Aboriginal

	Very Good	Good	Adequate	Poor	Very Poor	N/A
Help in Selecting Programs and Courses	18%	43%	28%	9%	2%	19%
Availability of Courses	16%	42%	28%	12%	2%	8%
Registration Procedures	18%	46%	23%	10%	3%	1%
Classroom Facilities	19%	52%	24%	5%	1%	1%
Drop-in Computer Work Stations	18%	41%	26%	13%	3%	30%
Places to Study	18%	42%	26%	12%	2%	8%
A Climate Free from Harassment or Discrimination	50%	39%	8%	2%	1%	5%
Library Services	27%	47%	19%	6%	1%	11%
Financial Aid Services	27%	48%	19%	5%	2%	51%
Food Services	19%	48%	24%	7%	2%	10%
Recreation Facilities	16%	40%	22%	16%	6%	41%
Places on Campus for Socializing	15%	44%	26%	12%	3%	17%
A Sense of Safety and Security at Night	28%	49%	18%	5%	1%	21%
Condition of Buildings and Grounds	33%	50%	14%	3%	1%	1%
Parking	11%	30%	27%	22%	10%	11%
Public Transit	22%	49%	19%	8%	3%	47%
Help in Finding Employment After Program	17%	25%	21%	26%	11%	50%
Help in Transferring to Another School	19%	42%	22%	13%	4%	64%

Appendix E

The National Occupation Classification (NOC)

The National Occupation Classification (NOC) is a systematic taxonomy of occupations in the Canadian labour market. It is based on extensive occupational research, analysis, and consultation conducted across the country. The NOC is intended for use in compiling, analyzing, and communicating information about occupations. There are approximately 25,000 occupational titles included in the NOC.[1]

The following tables compare the five most common occupations of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal former students, using the NOC system. It should be noted that while these were the occupations reported by the greatest number of respondents, collectively, far more respondents chose occupations that are not named here. The first table presents the information from all respondents, whereas the second table only reports the results for those who said that their training was somewhat or very related to their training.

Five most common Occupations

	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal
1995		
	Nurse Aides & Orderlies	Retail Salespersons
	Cooks	Food & Beverage Servers
	Food & Beverage Servers	Registered Nurses
	Secretaries (Except Legal & Medical)	Cashiers
	Community & Social Service Workers	Nurse Aides & Orderlies
1997		
	Community & Social Service Workers	Retail Salespersons
	Retail Salespersons	Registered Nurses
	Nurse Aides & Orderlies	Food & Beverage Servers
	General Office Clerks	Nurse Aides & Orderlies
	Visiting Homemakers, Housekeepers & Related Occupations	Visiting Homemakers, Housekeepers & Related Occupations
1999		
	Community & Social Service Workers	Retail Salespersons
	Nurse Aides & Orderlies	Food & Beverage Servers
	Visiting Homemakers, Housekeepers & Related Occupations	Registered Nurses
	Retail Salespersons	Nurse Aides & Orderlies
	General Office Clerks	General Office Clerks

1. From the document, *National Occupation Classification Occupational Descriptions*, published by Human Resources Development Canada.

Five most common Occupations, for those who reported that their job was somewhat or very related to their training.

	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal
1995		
	Nurse Aides & Orderlies	Registered Nurses
	Registered Nurses	Nurses Aides & Orderlies
	Carpenters	Visiting Homemakers, Housekeepers & Related Occupations
	Community & Social Service Workers	Early Childhood Educators
	Early Childhood Educators	Community & Social Service Workers
1997		
	Nurse Aides & Orderlies	Registered Nurses
	Community & Social Service Workers	Nurses Aides & Orderlies
	Visiting Homemakers, Housekeepers & Related Occupations	Visiting Homemakers, Housekeepers & Related Occupations
	Carpenters	Early Childhood Educators
	General Office Clerks	Community & Social Service Workers
1999		
	Community & Social Service Workers	Registered Nurses
	Nurse Aides & Orderlies	Nurses Aides & Orderlies
	Visiting Homemakers, Housekeepers & Related Occupations	Visiting Homemakers, Housekeepers & Related Occupations
	Early Childhood Educators	Accounting and Related Clerks
	Carpenters	General Office Clerks

If you would like to receive additional copies of
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